Pulpit Preaching

BERKELEY BAPTIST DIVINITY SCHOOL
SANDFORD FLEMING LIBRARY

UME 9 FEBRUARY, 1956 NUMBER 2

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A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

Our month's guest editor, John L. Casteel of the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, Rochester, N.Y., offers a word for pastors under the title, "Called of God."

This month's themes are "Prelude to Calvary," sermons emphasizing the Lenten message, and "Conspirators in Crisis," interpretations of those who figure in our Lord's Passion and the meaning of their lives in terms of our day. This series, written by Charles L. Seasholes, distinguished pastor of Dayton's First Baptist Church, abounds in suggestion and inspiration.

Next month's themes will be "Day of Gladness," sermons for Easter Sunday, and "The Invincible Surmise," sermons on immortality.

—o—

Books For Pulpit Preaching

How to Preach to People's Need is a title full of promise. This book by Edgar N. Jackson fulfill's the title's promise admirably and furnishes guidance and help for all preachers. In his preface the author says: "I have attempted to take areas of human need and deal with them in the light of the insight that recent years have been able to furnish . . . With respect for the traditions of the pulpit and a concern that the valuable tool of pulpit utterance be kept sharpened by the best insights into the nature and needs of humanity, this book is presented, with the prayer that it may help to bring pulpit and pew closer together in a healing, redeeming and soul-saving relationship." Among the persons in need with whom the book is concerned are the guilt-laden, fearful, insecure, defeated, immature and aged. (Abingdon, 191 pp., $2.75)

New Testament Faith for Today by Amos N. Wilder, professor of New Testament at Harvard Divinity School, is a discerning and remarkable exploration of the language and thought of the New Testament and its mod-

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Called of God

JOHN L. CASTEEL, Guest Editor

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God . . . to the Church of God, which is at Corinth . . . called to be saints . . . Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 1:1-3.

Here Paul takes the common form for beginning a letter and transforms it into an affirmation concerning our hope and the meaning of our life. Yet how far that salutation would be from Paul's address. In his hand the common formalities shine with light and hope and promise. What richness of life unfolds here at the very outset of his letter. Those at Corinth hearing these words read aloud in their gathering must have been quickened in heart as they began to comprehend the amazing vision of life being set before them, by one who held that hope and vision for himself: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God . . . to the church of God which is at Corinth, called to be saints. . . . Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Here the commonplace salutation is transformed into a declaration of hope and faith and here, men and women who once might have been described as "having no hope and without God in the world" have become changed into apostles and saints, the beneficiaries of God's gifts of grace and peace.

TRANSFORMATION

Now, it is just this transformation of the hopeless and God-deserted lives of men and women into the life of joy, promise and peace that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. It is for just such transmutation of the commonplace, dull and desperate, into the radically new and glorious, that the Church of Jesus Christ exists. It is just this redemption of the ordinary, mean and dying human experience into the extraordinary, rich and eternal life with God, that all of us here are

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Pulpit Preaching

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Address subscription orders to: Pulpit Preaching
P. O. Box 2088 — Jackson, Mississippi
In Great Britain: Religious Book Shop, 79 Reginald St Luton, Beds., England.

Send sermon manuscripts to Rev. C. L. Wallis, Keuka College, Keuka Park, New York. Receipt will be acknowledged.

Published and printed monthly at Jackson, Miss., by the Tombigbee Publishing Co. Subscription Price: U. S. and Canada, $4.00 per year; other countries $4.50 per year; single copies $.50. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Jackson, Mississippi under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Prelude to Calvary

od's Right of Way

RALPH W. SOCKMAN, Christ Church, New York, New York

One of the hardest things in life is to eak bad news to those we love. Suppose receive word that death has struck some- close to a friend, and we are asked to nvey the information. We almost die two aths in telling our friend of one. Suppose man who has been living in affluence sud- ly loses his fortune. Worse than the hard- p which he sees ahead for himself is the ought of seeing his family suffer. Or sup- se a husband learns that his wife has an urable disease. What anguish it costs him tell the dread news to his children.

Jesus had to face this business of breaking news to His beloved friends. He had tched their kindling enthusiasm and unting hopes as He led them through lilee while He healed the sick and received plaudits of the crowds. In His own mind foresaw the shadow of the cross. How uld He steel His disciples to endure the ming failure of all their dreams?

n the ninth chapter of Mark's Gospel we ce some of the steps by which Jesus pre- ed His disciples for their disappointment. e gospel of Mark, as you know, was the liest of the gospels to be written. It is arded as the work of John Mark, who s secretary to Peter, and it is our best de to the chronological order of the events he life of Our Lord.

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

Glance a moment at some of the things us did in breaking the news of His forth- ning crucifixion. The ninth chapter of rk opens with the Master taking His three st understanding disciples, Peter, James John, up into the mountain away from others. There He was transfigured be- e them and they caught a vision of Him company with Moses and Elijah. It was evelation of Christ's relation to the Law the Prophets. As they came down from mount, Christ bade the three tell no one ut what they had seen until the Son of n be risen from the dead. Here was a hint His death, but they did not get it.

ead on through the chapter and note the er efforts Jesus made to fortify His nds against His approaching death. He saw them trying to cast out evil spirits and failing, and He cried, "How long shall I be with you?" He heard them discussing who should be greatest in the kingdom He was to establish. You see, the little company was catching the hopes, the attitudes, the ambitions which go with earthly success. They were expecting great things of their popular and powerful leader. And what good things Christ longed to do for them! How would He let them know that they must expect hardship rather than comforts and conquests?

Well, this is what He said as the chapter closes: "Everyone shall be salted with fire." Moffatt translates the statement thus: "Every one has to be consecrated by the fire of the discipline." Just as in Jewish custom the sacrifice was salted before being offered on the altar, so said Jesus, His disciples would have to be salted with fire, that is be consecrated by the fire of discipline.

CONSECRATION

The word "consecration" is one of those terms which sounds too pious for common usage. We associate it with churches. We consecrate missionaries and bishops. But it sounds just a bit too good for office or household use.

Let us then leave this word consecration aside for the moment and approach life from the other end of the scale. A person is born and grows up without giving thought to God or the church. He regards his body, his mind, his talents, his opportunities as wholly his own to do with as he will. He says to himself, "My life is what I make it."

Of course, he soon discovers that he is not entirely free to make his life just what he wants to make it. If he is going to live in a family, he finds that sometimes family obligations have right of way over his wish and will. If he is to live in a community, and he cannot be a whole person unless he does, he finds the community sometimes has right of way. If his farm lies where the county decides to run a road, the county can exercise the right of "eminent domain," condemn his property, pay him a reasonable sum and put the road through his farm. If he has a contagious disease, the city has the right to

quarantine him. And also his nation has right of way, so it seems. It can draft him into military service.

Still a person can recognize all these limitations on his freedom and yet give no thought to the Divine Power which, above family or community or nation, has right of way through his life. A man may be so blind that he does not wake up to this fact, until, like the rich farmer in our Lord's parable, he confronts the fact of death. That fellow, you remember, was busily planning larger barns to hold his bounteous crops, when he heard the voice saying, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee. Whose, then, shall these things be?"

OPTIONAL AND OBLIGATORY

We must learn what part of our relationship with God is optional and what part is obligatory. Whether we shall live with God is not an optional matter. That is obligatory for "in him we live and move and have our being," whether we choose or not. How we shall live with God is, of course, optional. We may choose to live at logger-heads with God, just bumping into Him when we are "up against it" or "at our wit's ends" or in the crises of life, like that of death.

But remember, we came from God and to Him we return. We shall have to meet Him eventually in life as well as in death. Our option is to choose whether we shall meet Him in collision or in cooperation.

Now to align our lives in cooperation with God is to consecrate them. It is to recognize, as the Ancient Hebrews did, that life is a covenant relation with God, the party of the first part, and man, the party of the second part. Just as the Old Testament Hebrews offered their sacrifices on the altar in order to keep on good terms with the Lord, so Saint Paul in the New Testament, bids the Christians, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God." And Christ in our text declares, "Everyone has to be consecrated with the fire of the discipline."

Yes, the word consecration sounds pious, but it is the very practical option put up to all of us, whether we shall meet God in cooperation or in collision. The consecrated person chooses to cooperate.

Having seen what consecration is, let us go on to what it costs. "Everyone has to be consecrated by the fire of the discipline." That seems pretty bad news, too.

One summer in a Paris restaurant I watched a waiter preparing one of those dishes for which the French are famous. He brought a chafing dish and poured in—well I shall not describe in detail all the good things he poured in lest it make you too hungry to sit through the rest of this sermon! But the point of the telling is this, that the waiter kept boiling and stirring the ingredients until I thought he was boiling it all away. Half or two-thirds went up in vapor before he brought it to just the right consistency for serving. So in life, it sometimes takes a lot of boiling and stirring to bring these mixtures of desires, tastes, impulses which we call our lives to the point of divine rightness.

FEAR OF THE LORD

The "fire of discipline," Jesus termed it is not a very popular expression with our ease-loving age. The Bible says quite a lot about being refined as by fire, but we like our religion to be cool, comfortable, and air-conditioned.

The Bible has quite a bit to say about discipline, about enduring hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, about the strait gate and the narrow way that leadeth unto life, about taking up a cross. But we stress religion as the way to ease our tensions, to relax our minds and bodies, to make us comfortable and prosperous.

The Bible declares that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But we are prone to feel that to talk about fearing God misrepresents our loving Heavenly Father.

Perhaps we need to re-define fear. Fear is respect born of knowledge of adverse consequences. And maybe we need to re-define courage. Courage is the knowledge of what is rightly to be feared.

When I hear safe and comfortable speakers telling people that they need not fear anything or ever be tense over any situation I think of the glib radio commentator of whom Dr. Harold Bosley tells. It was during those war days when our aviators were flying over Europe in their Flying Fortresses. This radio commentator would report each day how many German Focke Wulf fighting planes had been shot down. Then he would end his broadcast by saying, "Who's afraid of the Focke Wulf?" The report of this broadcast reached some of our American aviators. And one of them sent back a card to the commentator. The card carried a picture of a Flying Fortress, and underneath it the commentator's question, "Who's afraid of the Focke Wulf?" Then, this answer, "We are." That was the true answer of a courageous man to a comfortable mouther of empty words.

God forbid that I should glibly say that you can throw all your fears and tensions and cares on God as easily as I can throw

traveling bag into the corner. I think at s moment of a business woman who is ing an insecure economic future. I think a widow who sat in my office last week. e is in her seventies and can be entered in ome for the aged. But she has a daughter, ndicapped both physically and mentally, om she has sheltered all these years. "Oh" mother said, "if they would only take , I would gladly fend for myself." Those real situations which call for more than ooth words about easing tensions and getting fears.

COSTS OF DISCIPLINE

No, to adjust one's life to God, that is to secrate it, costs. As Christ said, it costs e fire of discipline." It means bringing 's selfish and wayward desires into line. means trimming away some of our easy ulgences. It means saying in certain hours ecision, "Not my will but thine be done." if you want to see what that costs, look Gethsemane where our Lord sweat blood.

et's get it straight. God owns the ma- als from which our lives are made, and can't get them without paying the cost. here is our option: the really good things ife have to be paid for in advance; the ap and bad things are paid for after- d. How will you have it?

f we have to take the bitter with the et, isn't it better to take the bitter first? he road of life has its strait gates and ow stretches, isn't it better to go through e first and then look forward to the ader and brighter paths ahead?

nd that question leads us now to the d news, after this seemingly bad news "everyone has to be consecrated by the of discipline." When we have exercised option of meeting God in cooperation er than in collision, and when we have in advance for God's good things, then t happens?

or one thing, we enter into a satisfying wship with God. Listen to Him: "Behold, and at the door and knock; if any man my voice and open the door, I will come him, and will sup with him, and he with " When we yield our wills to God and come Him into our lives, we are no long- ere servants submitting to God's will; re His friends, sharing His understand- of our situations. It's a great satisfac- to feel oneself on the inside with God, he inside of a problem, or of a sorrow, f a pain. When God is on the inside with as if He were your guest supping with He seems to shut out so much of the d's storms and cold and bluster. He gives you a peace that passeth understanding.

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

And then with this feeling of fellowship comes also a sense of partnership with God. We are workers together with God, helping to heal the sorrows of others, using the lever of His church to lift the burdens of the oppressed, reaching out to help feed the hungry in Europe. When we feel ourselves partners with God, does it not make our little lives seem worthwhile? The late great Justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "I have always thought that not peace or power or popularity makes the success that one desires, but the trembling hope that one has come near to an ideal." That is what the consecrated person feels. He has a sense of fellowship and partnership with God in the pursuit of his ideals.

And then along with this goes a confidence. Sir Richard Livingstone of Oxford, speaking at the anniversary of Milton Academy, Boston, declared that after World War I, we hoped too much and believed too little. Starry-eyed with hope, we thought the world free from war and safe for democracy. But we cultivated no deep soil of faith to sustain such hopefulness. The literature of the 1920's and 1930's lacked greatness. Our religion lacked conviction. Now he hopes the very difficulties of our day will call forth great thinking and great living. Hope can be transmitted into faith by acting upon it. And he reminds us that "righteousness may be overborne but not overcome." This is the same truth which Toynbee, the world's greatest historian is telling us. It is the confidence a person gets when he consecrates himself to God and works in fellowship and partnership with Him.

And then all this leads to a sense of permanence. Are you ever depressed with the thought of how transient your life is here on the earth? However others may look up to you as you walk the street today, if you were to drop out, your absence would seem to go unnoticed six months from now. Our lives seem to disappear from the earth as snowdrops melt into the sea. But if one consecrates his work to God, building himself into God's plans, then as the Bible puts it, he becomes "bound in the bundle of life with God." Or again, "Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more forever."

When we "give in" to God, and "give up" to God, then is given unto us the sense of permanent security experienced by Isaac Watts, the hymn writer. Hear his words:

Our God, our help in ages past,

Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

It did seem bad news when Jesus said to His disciples, "Everyone has to be consecrated by the fire of the discipline." But where do you think Peter and James and John are now?

The Power of the Cross

EDWARD W. STIMSON, Dundee Presbyterian Church, Omaha, Nebraska

For Jews demands signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Greeks, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. I Corinthians 1:22-24.

In John Masefield's play, *The Trial of Jesus,* Claudia, the wife of Pontius Pilate, questions the Roman centurion who superintended the Crucifixion about how Jesus acted upon the Cross, and about the Centurion's appraisal of His claim to be the Savior of the world.

"What do you think of his claim?" she asks.

He replies, "If a man believes anything up to the point of dying on a cross for it, he will find others to believe it."

She then asks, "Do you think he is dead?"

His answer is, "No, lady, I don't."

"Where then is he?" she inquires.

He replies, "Let loose in the world, lady, where neither Roman nor Jew can stop his truth."

It is this power of Christ's cross which is the power to save the world. The Cross reveals the love of God, and it challenges us as individuals as a way of life, and it saves us personally from our sin and estrangement from God. But we would see the Cross in the context of our human social predicament, as God's method for solving the mess we are in. We would estimate the impact of the Cross upon world history, its power to save the world, as through the Cross, Christ has been let loose in the world where neither Roman nor Jew nor Greek nor Russian nor anyone else can stop Him.

To see this more clearly we are helped by the analysis made by Paul to the Corinthians. Paul was a world-minded Jew who had grown up in the Greek culture of Tarsus. He knew both cultures intimately and was able, with great social insight, to assess the impact of the Cross upon the type of mentality each represented, upon both Jews and Greeks. So Paul said, "For Jews demand signs, and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power and the wisdom of God."

This analysis is still pertinent to the modern world's problem because the ancient Jews and Greeks were each typical of perennial fallacies in the human approach to the world's chief problem.

JEWISH WORLD HOPE

Consider first the ancient Jews, from whose approach to the problem of world salvation Paul had been converted on the Damascus Road. Paul said, "The Jews demand signs, and the Cross is to them a stumbling block."

We know what he meant by that. The Jewish hope of salvation was bound up with their hope in the Law. Righteousness before God with them was defined in terms of obedience to the Law. They had applied the precepts of the Law of Moses to every conceivable detail of life, and the strict Jew made it his aim to conform to every jot and tittle of the Law and all of the interpretations of the Rabbis in the hope of winning Divine approval. That those who were so strict were proud of their morality goes without saying. But they were also contemptuous of the great majority of folks who could not learn all of the detailed regulations and who did not keep the law so strictly. The Pharisees would have nothing to do with them because they were outside the pale.

These strict Jews believed that if enough people could be persuaded to exercise the moral will-power to keep the whole law, if only for one day, God would send his Messiah, His Holy One, on the clouds of heaven to bring this sorry mess of life in this world to an end, and to inaugurate the great and blessed day of the Lord. Then this greater Son of David would set up his reign of righteousness in Jerusalem, and by his power and wisdom and righteousness would rule all nations, and establish peace on earth. For this hope they prayed, and to this end they labored to win proselytes and to persuade men to obey the Jewish law.

This point of view involved a despair that moral teaching of the law would of itself establish righteousness and peace in the earth. There would have to be miraculous divine intervention, an apocalyptic appea

ce. So the Jews were pessimistic about ing very much to change the world themves. They were hoping for a miracle from high. So they were always demanding ns, miraculous evidences of Messianic wer as the proof of the world's Savior. nen Jesus was upon earth, they were alys demanding signs of him.

But to these Jews the Cross was a stumng block. Not only was it unthinkable to em that the Messiah should suffer and die: was also immoral and unjust to think of vation or any other terms than legal rightusness. They had never interpreted the ffering servant prophecy in Isaiah Chapter as Messianic, and there was no place in ir thinking for vicarious sacrifice. The t that Jesus had died upon the Cross, conmned as a common felon, was a stumbling ck in their way to believing in Him as the rld's Savior.

MODERN LEGALISTS

f we look for the modern group who are counterpart of these ancient Jews, we y still find them among present-day ristians. For there are legalistic Christs today whose religion is largely Pharisai-. Their religion is composed mostly of ral prohibitions, a series of don'ts on ny non-essential matters, and they are y proud of their superior righteousness. d these narrow-minded Christians are also ne to despair of every winning enough ple to their brand of Christianity to save world, or make any observable improvent in society. They also depreciate all vements to improve social conditions and tudes, and they expect that the only way world can be saved is by the return of the d with power to end history as we know nd to force everyone to obey His will. ile these people would say they believe in Cross for their personal salvation they not believe it can do much for society as hole. So far as the answer to the Lord's yer, "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be e on earth," is concerned, these people ld still line up with the orthodox Jews in expecting the Cross to have social power effectiveness. Not believing in the ss's social effectiveness, they block the al application of the gospel.

ut the Greeks in today's world are far re in evidence and more influential, and re harmful. Instead of emphasizing the to obey moral law, and looking for aculous intervention to save the world, ancient Greeks sought wisdom. They ted an intellectual solution, a theoretical acea for the world's ills, an idealistic pia.

Plato had started the rage of thinking of the ideal society in his *Republic*. Yet he had recognized realistic limits to his ideal state: the institutions of society could not arbitrarily disregard the limitations of human nature, and must bow before the relationship of the soul to the Supreme Being.

But the later Greek seekers after wisdom, called the Gnostics, were not so realistic in their limitation of the speculative intellect.

JOACHIM'S CHILDREN

Perhaps some of you read that interesting 30th anniversary article in Time Magazine entitled "Journalism and Joachim's Children." In it the author traces the malign influence of Gnostic thinking, inherited from the Greeks, in our modern world. He refers to a book, *The New Science of Politics*, written by Eric Voegelin. Professor Voegelin has traced the growth of Gnostic Greek influence in Western social thought beginning with Joachim of Flora. Joachim of Flora was an abbott in Italy in the 12th Century, who followed the Gnostics and was the first Christian to pervert the Christian hope of salvation into a systematic belief in an earthly society of purified and perfected men.

A Gnostic is one who seeks to rise above nature and find salvation through "hidden knowledge" rather than through faith and works. Christianity had resisted the Gnostic heresy and driven it underground in the Second Century, but it survived to come back in a new social form in Joachim. Joachim believed that human history could be divided into three periods, corresponding to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that the third realm, about to begin, was to the age of wisdom inspired by the Holy Spirit and ruled by a superman leader from Babylon.

Joachim's influence may be seen in the many intellectualist utopian theories that have plagued the West ever since: (1) In the extremists among English Puritans who thought they could found a "communion of saints" on earth which would take over and perfect temporal government; (2) In the intellectual theorists of the French Revolution who crowned the Goddess of Reason in Notre Dame, and proclaimed man's ability to achieve his own salvation on earth; (3) In the writings of Auguste Comte who also set up a system of three realms, which he called three states of knowledge, and predicted that his third Realm, soon to begin, called "Positivism," would enable the scientists to take over the general direction of the world. Modern scientific humanism, technocracy, and the writings of H. G. Wells have followed this line.

MODERN GNOSTICISM

In our modern period this Gnostic type of theorizing in Nietzsche helped inspire Fascism and Nazism, both speculative systems.

In Karl Marx it gave rise to Communism, with its theoretical utopian hope of a perfect society under the rule of the sinless proletariate once the revolution is complete and the necessary interim government can wither away.

Whether or not we can follow this interesting commentary on modern history in all its details, we must agree that the Greek intellectual stunt of substituting a theoretical panacea, an ideology instead of a realistic solution, which has denied the basic fact of human sinfulness and need of radical conversion, and sought to save the world by some pet scheme of the human mind has been the major fallacy of modern history. To those who hold any such idealistic intellectual scheme, the Cross is foolishness!

But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the proud of will, and foolishness to the intellectually proud, but to those who are called, whether Jews or Greeks in their original type, whether primarily doers or primarily thinkers, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God! He is the power of God not to make an immediately perfect society on earth, but to win more and more obedience, to progressively transform history so long as history lasts until He whose right it is shall reign!

The Cross is the wisdom and power of God to bring salvation to the world because it probes and meets the real problem in man, the problem of sin in the human heart. Or if you want it in terms of modern psychology, the problem of the ego in the subconscious mind. The Jewish approach thinks it is a problem of the conscious moral will, of obedience to law and miraculous divine reward. The Greek Gnostic approach thinks it is a matter for speculative thinking in the rational mind. But as Christians we know that the human problem is a corrupted heart, a selfish ego deep within, which must be changed, and which neither moral law nor philosophical speculation can ever touch.

ONE ADEQUATE REMEDY

What can touch it is the love of God revealed in the death of His Son on Calvary. This love can do and does do in human hearts what nothing else can. It cools hot lusts; kills destructive hates; overcomes cruel prejudices; rebukes selfishness and pride; shames all cowardness and dishonesty and appeals successfully to the human heart's latent capacity for goodness. It releases the power of God Himself within the innermost motivation of each person who surrenders to Him in faith. This power makes men over, and binds them together in loving fellowship. It makes possible the new type of community—the voluntary community of willing, mutually helpful servants of the common good. It inspires the kind of citizenship that makes successful democracy possible, when there are enough transformed Christians to set the moral tone of the commonwealth. This is not to say that it can establish a perfect society in this world, for Christians themselves, who have been won at the foot of the Cross are not completely perfected, but only on the road to Christlikeness. But it does offer the one source of moral and spiritual power adequate to inspire real social betterment. A changed society requires changed men who put their faith in Christ to work for the common good. Without changed men the human problem will continue to thwart any real saving of the world, and tyrannical men will still be able to climb to power by the murder of millions.

This is Christian realism, and it offers the only lasting hope for world history.

Some say this approach is too slow, too difficult, too impractical. Evil men have the atom bomb and the time is short. They doubt this power is adequate. That is because they do not know the power of God in their own hearts. To those who have been called, and have responded to His love and know what power of God for moral and spiritual victory has been released in our own lives, it is not too difficult, but is a tremendous challenge. This is God's way of saving the world, and He will not be thwarted. And He has left it in our hands to bring it to the need of the nations. This is the call of the evangel, the mission call to the Church of Christ:

O Zion haste, thy mission high fulfilling
To tell to all the world that God is light
That he who made all nations is not willing
One soul should perish, lost in shades of night:
Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace
Tidings of Jesus, redemption and release.

We preach Christ crucified, the power and the wisdom of God—let loose upon the world where no earthly power can stop His truth!

he Cross Before Us in a World in Turmoil

ENSWORTH REISNER, First Methodist Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

To this end was I born . . . that I should bear witness unto the truth.

The world is so much in turmoil that eryone is affected. Recently I talked to a ung Greek boy whose father and uncle and ny other relatives had been killed in the al war that raged over that little penin-la. Practically the whole of his growing e had been spent in either under Nazi mination, starvation or civil war. Said he somewhat ungrammatical, yet incisive, glish, "When you have been in so many moil you have to believe in God. I think is the God who is crucify." The composer the hymn stated the same thing in dif-ent words, "In the cross of Christ I glory, wering o'er the wrecks of time."

Arnold J. Toynbee, the historian and ilosopher, has stated the same thing in ll other words: "The painfully perturbing solution of familiar forms, which suggests weaker spirits that the ultimate reality is thing but chaos, may reveal to a steadier d more spiritual vision the truth that the kering film of the phenomenal world is illusion which cannot obscure the eternal ty that lies behind it." To paraphrase s terrific sentence, when the familiar ngs of everyday life are disrupted by the th of a loved one, the dissapointments in erson, or the breakdown of a situation, weaker person thinks that everything is os. They say, "What's the use?" But the e trouble looked at by a steadier person h spiritual insight appears to be part of d's purpose.

When Jesus was standing before Pilate l his whole world seemed in turmoil, His ciples forsaking Him, the once acclaiming wd clamoring for his blood, Pilate asked, rt thou the King of the Jews?" To which Messiah replied, "Thou sayest I am g," but then he went on to describe his al mission which was part of the unifying pose of God, "To this end was I born and this cause came I into the world that I uld bear witness unto the truth."

EMERGENCE OF SAINTS

What happens when the world goes into mity? The ancient prophet said, "A sav-remnant shall return." The modern ologist Sorokin has explained it in this ner: "Every five or six hundred years main emphasis of humankind's culture fts. For the last five or six hundred years have been living in a sensate culture where the things we valued were things apprehended through the senses. The material accretions of science were far more important to us than to the people of the middle ages who cared less for plumbing and more for the monastic seeking eternal life. Having clearly authenticated his position that the last several hundred years have been dedicated to the accumulation of sensately apprehended material things and that such has not been characteristic of the human race except through a brief span of time, Sorokin went on to say that we are now shifting from a sensate culture into an ideational culture when men will put forth their efforts to achieve advancement in the area of ideas rather than in the area of material discovery.

When this shift comes, says sociologist Sorokin, mankind is thrown into a cataclysm of turmoil. Mass populations are moved from one section of the earth's surface to another. Millions are killed. Then the character of man tends to polarize; then the bad becomes viciously worse and the good becomes significantly more saintly. But in such a turmoil the vast mass of people remain in chaotic confusion. They are the turmoil. It is apparent in the little fussings and confusions of their organizations, their businesses, their governments; their petty squabbling in home and group and race, and among nations. "This," he says, "is an evidence of the turmoil of the world which attends the dissolution of familiar forms."

When such a thing happens in the course of human destiny a small minority of viciously disposed evil men exploit their fellows, coldly grabbing for power and position. Dictators do it on the high level and gangsters on the low level. But soon these exploiters exploit themselves and like a certain breed of snake who in fury starts eating his own tail, eventually they consume themselves.

There is also a tiny minority of the saintly good, the moral heroes, who save the world and whose plans, though they themselves be killed, are adopted by the confused masses. There is a singular yet common characteristic of these moral heroes, they have "the steadier and more spiritual vision which sees behind the phenomenal illusions" of the world the eternal unity of God. As Sorokin would put it, their lives have been emersed in the Sermon on the Mount: "To this end were they born that they should bear witness of the truth." The truth is the magnet which

draws together the scattered filings of a world in turmoil.

GOD'S LOVE

The simple truth is that God through his sacrificing love saves us from turmoil when we adopt his love. Christ crucified dramatized this ever present fact in the world. Does this seem over simplification, somewhat foolish? Paul said, in Corinthians, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." What are these weak and foolish things? The problem of a world in turmoil sought a solution then. What would seem weaker or less profound than a person who allowed himself to be killed as a malefactor?

Let's continue with the letter of Paul to the Corinthians. He said this when talking about the solution to man's turmoil, "The Jews require a sign. The Greeks seek after wisdom. We preach Christ crucified . . . which is unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." You see the Jewish people hoped to emerge from the turmoil of their world at some future time when a worldly Messiah would take hold of the government of the world backed by the hosts of heaven. They required a sign for the advent of this future millenium.

In a way they are like the modern communist dialectic materialist who looks for the coming in of the age of world communism under a dictatorship of the proletariat. Their age of glory is all in the future. They look for a sign of its coming. To them anyone who preaches a present glory, a present love, a present unity with goodness and peace and joy is a stumbling block. Those Jews in the ancient day seeking a sign are not only like modern communists but also they were like some modern religionists who seek a sign that the end of the world is coming and who, in the meantime, preach damnation to all who will not, like them, look for a future sign. To this group that person is a stumbling block who finds in Christ's present presence a present kingdom of God, a present visitation of the Holy Spirit, a present realization of the Serenity and truth of God's unity underlying our confusion.

WAY OF SALVATION

The Jews required a sign, but the Greeks sought after wisdom. To them Christ crucified was foolishness. There are today so many people who feel that our only salvation for a world in turmoil is through the long, slow process of education, through man's increased wisdom and knowledge. To them the transformation that can come to a world in turmoil through Christ crucified is as it was to the Greeks, foolishness. They do not see how mankind can be freed from turmoil by anything other than man himself. They do not see how their own personal confused situation can be alleviated by anything other than their own planning. They are like the boy who could not see how butterflies could come from caterpillars unless he himself wrapped them in silk thread and slit them open to release their wings.

All reliance upon the sacrificial love of God is foolishness. The power of Christ crucified to release the unifying purpose of truth and force of God in the world is foolishness. To them wisdom which unravels confusion is man's achievement and that but slowly gained. They do not understand that more is wrought by the love of God come down to earth and crucified as a common malefactor than by all the wisdom of men. They do not know that God goes straight to the heart of men transforming and realigning and redeeming even the worst criminal who hangs side by side with Christ. It is those who do not require a sign or who do not seek only after wisdom; those who accept Christ crucified who become the moral heroes, the saving remnant of a world in turmoil.

THE STONE CROSS

Three faces stood out in the flickering light. One was flushed with passion, the mouth distorted by a wild yell. The second face was sallow and old; it glowed like phosphorus on a dead fish lapped by the cynical smile of the age-old ocean. The third face was the face of Wu Ling. For many years Wu Ling had struggled to build a simple Christian chapel on the village square. There was little money so the only thing upon the building was thatch except for a stone cross which stood on the baked earth at the head of the chapel. His old father, a would-be scholar of the old regime, used to sit on the balcony of the tea house overlooking the square and cynically smile as if he knew that nothing would ever change the face of China. But Wu Ling had persisted in his plans ever since the time he met the Christ woman in far away Soochow. So he built his church to tell the people, as he put it, "about the God who crucified himself for us."

Then came the revolution and the dragon's tail lashed the country into turmoil. Wu Ling's own son, a youth not yet with beard, joined the Red Army. They came to the town and the boy denounced the Christ of Wu. The soldiers set fire to the chapel. They rais-

. their fists and sang loud the wild song of
e future while the grandfather looked from
e tea house balcony and smiled the dirge
the past. Wu Ling entered the square.
ll stared at Wu. Would he be broken?
ould he weep tears of bitter sorrow. As
e flame of the burning chapel died the
ne cross stood strong against the glow of
e embers. Only did the solemn face of Wu
ange. It glowed with a new light, serene
d eternal. The God who crucified himself
r us still stood. Wu smiled because he
ew.

Could this story be in response to the last line of a letter we received from Elizabeth Johannaber, our missionary in Soochow, Kiangsu, China? She was in the midst of that sallow old land and among the bright red new regime is living for Christ crucified. Her last sentence is this, "If I were permitted to say only one thing it would be this: In the struggle for preservation of things which are lasting and eternal don't wait until it is too late to earnestly begin the struggle." "To this end was I born . . . that I should bear witness unto the truth."

hristianity Looks to Calvary

DONALD SIMMS, JR., Anthony Methodist Church, Anthony, New Mexico-Texas

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
—I Corinthians 1:18.

Christianity looks to Calvary. We face lvary because there is no other way we n face and still be Christian. At Calvary find the center, the heart, the soul of our th. Here is love, mercy, and foregiveness God—the God who walks through the alley of the shadow" with us. Here is the pe, aspiration, and heavenward reach of n. At Calvary God is lifted up that man ght be uplifted. Here the Supreme suffers t man might not suffer supremely.

For Paul, the Cross was the central fact Christ's message and work. He had much say about it, and in this statement to the urch at Corinth he is saying: "If you do t believe, then the Cross is foolishness; but those that believe it is salvation, the power God." And down through the centuries Church has had its eyes focused upon s central actuality in the life and history man.

LET'S LOOK FOR ANSWERS

Christianity looks to Calvary! But why? seek answers one must ask questions: o? What? How? Why?

Who causes us to look to Calvary? Jesus rist. He alone.

What causes us to look to Calvary? The th of Jesus the Christ there on the Hill the Skull.

How does it cause us to look to Calvary? look to Calvary because Jesus' death re became the most momentous occurce in the history of man. Chronologically spiritually most of the world looks to t event.

Why does Jesus' death cause us to look to lvary? This is the difficult question. Men have been searching the *why* for two thousand years. "Why did Jesus die?" This is the beginning of our speculation, the reason for our study of the Scriptures, and the final obstacle we must surmount if we find our faith.

As we seek the answer let us ask questions of his contemporaries, of the "man on the street" today, and, finally, of Christ himself.

QUESTION TO PILATE

We enter the Praetorium on that Black Saturday after Jesus was crucified. There we confront Pilate on the procurator's throne and ask the question: "Pilate, governor of Judea, why did Jesus die?" "Why," he answers, "do you not know that this Carpenter of Nazareth was a trouble-maker from the beginning? Of course, he didn't bother me in a direct way, but he stirred up the people. If I had let him go the leaders of the church would have reported me to the Emperor and said that I had supported an insurrectionist. You do not seem to realize the pressure that was on me. There are hundreds of thousands of these Jews here in the city for the Feast of the Passover. Their passions were running high. Their religious fervor was inflammable. It might well have cost me my position. That's why he died."

Finding no help in his answer, we take our leave and journey the few steps to the gates of the Temple. There, knotted in rabid discussion of yesterday's events, we find a group of the Temple priests. "Say, you Pharisees and Sadducees, you ministers and leaders of the church, why did Jesus die?" They all seem to answer at once, with deep passion and conviction in their voices. "Do you not know that he interfered with the established religion? Do you not know he preached and practiced the stupid doctrine

that Jehovah God was the God of all people? Everyone knows that he is *our* God, and that *we* are his people. Why, he even said that these Samaritans are children of God even as we are. That was bad enough, but he even interfered with the legitimate money-changing activities of the temple. He called the temple a 'den of thieves,' and said that we were getting rich from the sale of the sacrificial animals. That's why he died!"

THE PEOPLE SPEAK

In sorrow we turn away from their lack of understanding and then crossing the street we find a group of people, some of those who only yesterday clamored for the release of Barabbas and for the crucifixion of Jesus. "Listen, you people of Israel, why did Jesus die?" "This man of Galilee," they answer deliberately, "said that he was the Messiah, the promised one of God. And for a while we believed him, for he certainly did have strange powers. But we found out that he was an imposter. The true Messiah will take up the sword to cast out these Roman swine, and yet he was even afraid to defend himself. He even told his own closest followers to put up their swords. We suppose it was because of the silly notion he had that 'My kingdom is not of this world.' What other Kingdom is there, we ask you? Such a man cannot be he for whom we look and wait. That's why he died, and rightly so!"

We leave the city and take the road to Emmaus, for something within us tells us we must seek further the answer to our question. A few miles out of Jerusalem we recognize a group of his disciples. As we approach we hear them muttering in low voices, "We had hoped that it would have been he who would have redeemed Israel." They turn to face us as we approach, and we confront them with our question. "Say, Peter, James, John, listen, you followers of Jesus, why did Jesus die?" Peter, who always seemed to be the first to speak, answers. "We can't quite understand it," he replies, with evident sorrow and frustration in his voice. "We warned him not to come to Jerusalem, but he steadfastly set his face to the city, even though we told him they were plotting for his life. It seems to me he was almost beside himself. When he used the whip of cords in the temple he knew they would be after him, but he did not flee. Then, when that traitor Judas brought the soldiers to take him, he refused to let us defend him. I supposed," he continued in obvious confusion, "he died because he wanted to die."

"What are you going to do?" we ask. "Well," he replies, "I do not know what the others are going to do, but I am going back to my fishing."

MODERN ANSWERS

Leaving the heartbroken little company, we return to our homes and walk the streets of our city. We meet an intelligent-looking man, well-dressed and obviously in a hurry. "Say, Mister, would you mind if we asked you a question?" He, in surprise, says, "Why, no, go ahead." He is little short of astounded when we ask: "Why did Jesus die?" He does not seem to have a ready answer, and after a long moment of thought he says: "Well, it seems to me that he died to establish a new religion." As we thank him and continue on our way, a thundering voice wells up within us: "A new religion? Are there not religions aplenty? Were there not many in His day? Were those who crucified Him not a 'religious' people?"

We return now, back from our quest, and still our heart murmurs its dissatisfaction with the answers we have heard. Still we feel that our question, "Why did Jesus die?", has been only glossed over, has been largely shunned and ignored. Where else, then, can we turn?

CHRIST RESPONDS

Only one place can we look now, and that is to Him who is the "way, the truth, and the life." Now, with contrite hearts and prayerful spirits we turn to the Risen Lord himself: "Lord, Master, Christ, why did you die?" He answers in characteristic simplicity: "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me."

"Lord, why did you die?" we ask again pressing Him further. "I died," He says, "to show you that God is the Good Shepherd who steps into the darkness of human tragedy and despair to seek and find the last, the least and the lost."

"Lord, why did you die?" "I died to show you that our Father is one who welcomes home his prodigal and spendthrift children and who opens wide his arms of mercy and forgiveness and restoration to all who 'come to themselves, and arise and go to the Father's house.'"

"Lord, why did you die?" "I died to show you that God is the Good Samaritan, who kneels down in the dust of the road to bind up the hurts, bruises and wounds of men desperately besieged by sin within and evil without."

"Lord, why did you die?" Again we ask and now His eyes are filled with a wondering sorrow that we still do not understand. He looks upon us with a gaze that pierces t

depths of the soul: "I died for you." ocked by this, his final answer, we recoil m Him and cry: "You died for me, Lord, me?" He speaks alone with His eyes, ich make a piercing and affirmative re-. "For me, Lord? Even for me?" He steps ser, places His pointed fingertips upon breast: "Yes, my child, for you."

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST

Thus it is that we find the answer to our estion, "Why did Jesus die?" And thus we d the reason that Christianity looks to lvary. "I died for you" is why we look to lvary. And the church may mount the oss on the highest hills and on the steeples the temples; we may use it to decorate our ictuaries and the graves of our dead; ologians may ponder and write; preach-may preach with passion and with power; *until this answer of Christ is understood, hope is vain, our profession an abomina-n, and our faith a hollow mockery.*

But if we see on Calvary's hill a Saviour; we see there the "lamb of God slain for our s from the foundation of the world"; if see one who rectifies, heals and over-nes the sins, the burdens, the doubts and fears within us; if we see one who forgives, as only He can forgive, and who leads, as only He can lead, *then the cross is not foolish-ness, but the power of God.*

We look to Calvary because we see there a glimpse of the eternal in the temporal; we see that which towers over the wrecks of time; we see there the vital beginning of the Kingdom of God on earth.

As we look to Calvary, we do not see Him hanging there, but feel, here, now, His risen presence, and cry out, with the poet, in a new realization of our faith:

I cannot do it alone, the waves break high;
The fogs rise cold around me, and the lights go out in the sky,
But I know, in the end, we shall win,
Jesus and I.

A coward and wayward and weak, I change with the changing sky
Today so strong and brave, tomorrow too weak to try.
But He ne'er gives in, so we two shall win—
Jesus and I.

he Glory of the Cross

J. CLYDE HENRY, First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

God forbid that I should glory, save in he cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, nd I unto the world. Galatians 6:14.

This verse is a mountain peak with three sses on it. There is the cross, most promi-t of all, on which Jesus died. Then there he cross on which the world (that is, hu-n society apart from Christ) is crucified, d up to the gaze of the Christian, not only dead, but as a vile, repulsive thing. And re is the cross from which the Christian veys the other two, to which he himself astened, dead to the world and to self, t he may know the life in Christ. But f these crosses have but a single message, that is that the cross of Christ is the object in all the world which gives man sion for unqualified boasting.

There are some today who might challenge h a claim. It may have been all right for l in his day to speak in such extravagant guage. But in this modern age there are housand things in our life and in our roundings which we receive with delight which we cannot contemplate without piration and pride. Great are the tri-phs of civilization. But in every one of them, in every product of man's ingenuity, there is some dark background which casts over men's minds the shadow of fear. There is nothing in all the work of men's hands in which we can boast without apology. But in the cross of Jesus Christ that darkest blotch upon the pages of history there shines a light of unrelieved and undiminished glory. For in that cross "so despised by the world" we have the demonstration of God's power to save, the assurance of God's forgiving love, and the manifestation of the life of supreme blessedness.

GOD'S POWER

There is, first of all, supreme glory in the cross of Christ because the cross is the demonstration of God's power to save. The ordinary man today has no real sense of guilt before God, and no realization of the disabling effects of sin in his life. He thinks of God with what someone has bitingly described as "the domestic animal conception of God." As you keep sheep to give you wool, and cows to give you milk, so you keep God to give you forgiveness, if you need it. This point of view is grimly illustrated by the story of Heinrich Heine, writhing on his bed of agony, who, asked by an officious visitor

if he had hope of the forgiveness of sins, replied with a glance upward of mocking bitterness, "Why, yes, certainly that's what God is for."

Even among Christians there is the tendency to think of sin as an outer coat, lightly to be tossed aside when the sinner wills. This is evident in the tendency among some to use the parable of the Prodigal Son as the full explanation of the gospel with all the emphasis upon what man does. This beautiful story is precious for its great message that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. But it is woefully lacking as a picture of God's self-sacrificing love in seeking and saving the sinner. There is no atonement in this parable and apparently no need for a Saviour. There is no seeking love of God. The father in the parable pays absolutely no attention to his wayward son, just lets him alone, and apparently does nothing to win him back. Considered as a picture of the gospel its teaching is just this and nothing more: that when anyone, altogether of his own will chooses to get up and go back to God, he will be received with acclamation.

But is it not foolish to put all the emphasis of the gospel invitation on "whosoever will" in a world of universal won't? For the sinner who knows himself to be a sinner and knows what it is to be a sinner, only a God-will gospel will suffice. If the gospel is to be committed to the dead wills of sinful men and there is nothing above or beyond, who then can be saved? If I am to be changed something must lay hold of me and change me. And the cross of Christ is the demonstration of the fact that God has come to seek and to save the lost. Here sin is not lightly dismissed or ignored or annulled, for all the fearsome consequences of the judgment of God upon sin, "the wrath of God" are taken over and borne by God himself. Every single act of forgiveness is sealed by the blood of the Lord. God has power to save because he himself has borne our sin and carried our sorrows. The chastisement of our peace was upon him.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

There is supreme glory in the cross of Christ also because the cross brings to us the assurance of God's forgiveness. Bunyan in his famous dream expresses this with beautiful simplicity. "Now I saw in my dream that the highway up which Christian was to go was fenced on either side with a Wall and that Wall is called Salvation. Up this way therefore did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back.

"He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a Cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a Sepulchre. So I saw in my Dream, that just as Christian came up with the Cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the Sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more."

There is something in the vision of the Christ upon the Cross which brings to the repentent sinner the immediate awareness that God has forgiven him. It is not necessary to understand all the implications of the atonement. That is a mystery locked in the mind of God alone.

None of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed
Nor how dark was the night that the
Lord passed through
E'er he found the sheep that was lost.

But all of us can sing in exultation:

Jesus paid it all,
All to him I owe
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

Christina Rossetti puts it in beautiful poetic form:

Can peach renew lost bloom
Or violet lost perfume,
Or sullied snow turn white as
overnight?
Man cannot compass it, yet never
fear:
The leper Naaman
Shows what God will and can,
God who worked then is working here.
Wherefore let shame, not gloom,
betinge thy brow;
God who worked then is working now.

LIFE OF BLESSEDNESS

And there is supreme glory in the cross of Jesus because in it we have the manifestation of the life of supreme blessedness. Ay, but there's the rub. Many see the cross, some believe in it, but few glory in it, especially when we realize that it means death to self. It is easy to sing about the sufferings of Christ. It is wonderful to boast of his death for us on the cross. But when we are called upon to enter into the fellowship of his sufferings, to be made conformable to his death, we shrink back. The price is just too great. This text was spoken in direct opposition to those who were unwilling to pay the price in persecution and self-sacrifice required of those who took a bold stand for Christ. And

needs to be repeated every time the things the world get into the affections and de-res of the Christian.

Our confessions of faith are so easily spok- and ofttimes so very shallow. I suppose u all know the old story of the young man 10 was writing a love letter to his sweet-art, boasting of his great love. He wrote, o show my love for you I would cross the ackless desert, I would brave the burning rest, I would traverse mighty oceans, I ould face the Artic cold," and so on and on. ien, at the end, he added, "P. S. I will be er tomorrow night if it doesn't rain." We ugh at such a story. Yet how many times speak to Christ in just that way.

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord."

(Of course, that is, if it's a step upward.)

"Over mountain or plain or sea."

(But I would expect to have first-class accommodations.)

"I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord."

(But please, to an audience that will appreciate my presence.)

"I'll be what you want me to be."

(As long as it doesn't cost too much in personal sacrifice or prestige.)

Sometime ago we had a special meeting in church and invited an outstanding speak- He agreed to come, but before the date ote to say that when he totalled up his penses he found that he would have only 5.32 left out of the honorarium, which rdly seemed to him adequate recompense his trip. I believe some adjustment was de, and he came and delivered a magnifi- t address closing it by saying, "Such is need of the world without Christ today t I have dedicated my life to do all that within my power to make the message of gospel known throughout the world." And ould not help adding to myself, "Yes, if get more than $16.32 for doing it."

low many times we take the same attitude. are quite willing to serve Christ so long we get something out of it and it doesn't t us too much. The ancient world hated church and feared the church because saw in the church a fellowship of self- rificing love which if allowed to grow uld be the death of worldly society. But ay the world does not fear the church, the church does not give offence to the rld, because you can hardly tell the differ- e between the standard of living of the Christian and the non- Christian. Isn't it strange that we who are followers of Jesus Christ insist on living like kings, when he who is the King of kings lived like a pauper?

RATIONALIZING

It is very easy to rationalize our selfishness. We have to keep up outward appearances, a man should live so that he will command certain respect, everyone has the right to some pleasures. It is easy to rationalize our selfishness, but it is time we eradicated selfishness and faced spiritual realities. How can we pray sincerely for the lost throughout the world when the money we spend for unnecessary trifles could send an army of missionaries out into all the world? How can we honestly ask young people to dedicate their lives in sacrificial service to Christ while we continue to live in luxury and ease that they will never know if they leave all to follow Christ? How can we brazenly profess our love to Christ when we will not accept the shame and the reproach of his cross? John Wesley said, "Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the Kingdom of heaven on earth." There is glory in so marching in triumph under the banner of the cross though we may be derided as the filth and offscouring of the world. But are there those who are willing thus to suffer the loss of all things that they may know Christ and make him known, who are willing thus to embrace the cross, to die to self that Christ might be manifest?

When this world shall be dissolved into cosmic dust, and the sun has become a burned-out cinder, when the bands of the constellations have been loosed and the heavens rolled up as a scroll, there will still remain unchanged the cross of Christ, for it is rooted in the heart of God. There will remain the eternal cross and your immortal soul judged, approved or condemned by the Cross. It will be too late then to decide what response you should make. Now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation. God grant that all of us may accept the Cross as the proof of God's power to save, as the assurance of his forgiving love and as the pledge of our self-denying commitment to Christ, that we may say with the apostle, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

The Dignity of Salesmanship

ROY A. BURKHART, First Community Church, Columbus, Ohio

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me John 12:32.

Need we be reminded that the greatest salesman in history was Jesus? Once there was just one Christian. Once there was one who saw the full meaning that God is the father of us all and that we are His children and that the hope of the world lies in men living like brothers and sisters, living by this amazing rule that we treat the other fellow as we would like him to treat us if we were in his place. This man Jesus sold his idea to a few people and they in turn sold it to other people and they in turn sold it to other people until finally it moved out of Palestine, across Europe to England and finally came across the sea.

A few people here began to sell those ideals, and finally they became incorporated in a Declaration of Independence and a Constitution and a Bill of Rights. They came to be a whole concept of the collective will of government. That is the genius of this amazing land where we live and have within it the freedom to worship, the sense of the glorious dignity of man, the idea that man's development is the goal of life and never the means to the end. We know in our hearts that if such ideas are not sold to the whole world the world will be in chaos.

The only hope for the world is that Jesus' idea of man as the goal of life, with a dignity capable of self-government, an ideal embracing the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, really will be sold to the world. Otherwise the world will be in chaos and there will be no hope for our unborn children. Jesus did a wonderful job of selling and the spirit of him is the only hopeful spirit in the world.

So our Lord is the master salesman of our history. He was the super-salesman and he had the most precious product ever sold to the world and because our forefathers have been sold on it we have in America a way of life that has produced goods and services that no people have ever known on the whole earth. We know too in our hearts that unless we sell that idea to the world and share its genius with the world we cannot keep it. So we ought to dignify salesmanship .

JESUS AS A SALESMAN

Now let us look at the approach of Jesus as a salesman. Let us recall the day when he was going along the street and a short man who knew he could not see him climbed a tree to get a better view. After a while Jesus came along and saw him perched up above the road. He said, "Zacchaeus, come down, I want to dine at your house." Zacchaeus came down fast and they went to his house and there a salesmanship job was done, a magnificent piece of salesmanship. For Zacchaeus came to a new understanding of his dignity and of God, as his Father, and his own mission as a brother. He came forth and said: "I have been sold a new idea and that is this; that I pay back every man from whom I stole, not only what I took from him but four times what I stole and I will give half of all I have left to the poor." That is a great job of selling.

A man said to me: "Salesmanship is not selling a person something, it is influencing a person to buy." And that is exactly what Jesus did. He did not sell Zacchaeus anything but somehow or other as they were together Zacchaeus bought a new idea. He was influenced to believe that he should be honest with his fellow men, that he should square his life with them and that he ought to share the money that he took unjustly from the poor: What a wonderful idea for Zacchaeus to buy: to be honest with his fellows and to have a heart.

There are other important things about that incident. Jesus made his contact with Zacchaeus and any salesman knows that if you really want to get people to buy you have to contact the buyer. I have watched salesmen for a good many years. I know one of the greatest salesmen in this congregation in my judgment. He would not be selected by the average sales manager when he first looked at him because he neither looks like a salesman nor talks like one nor acts like one. But in my judgment he is one of the greatest salesmen that I have ever met. One of the reasons he is great is that he does not sell you, he simply influences you to buy. But there is another secret; he makes contact, he establishes a relationship and that is what Jesus did.

JESUS' PRINCIPLES

Sales people know that if you can just get a salesman to see enough people and if he has the capacity to establish the right relationship that he is going to make good. So Jesus makes clear for us two magnificent principles, whether we are selling a product or whether we are selling a faith; we live with a person until he chooses to buy, and we

tablish a relationship with him. The latter ust always come first for it includes the lling of the self.

Now there is another interesting story out Jesus which we all know. A rich young ler came to him and asked: "Master, what ust I do to win happiness and peace and ernal life?" Jesus said, "Just follow the les, the Ten Commandments." He said "I ve already done that." Jesus answered: here is only one thing left for you to do, at is have a heart for other people, become ncerned about them, move out of the center you and begin to center in the other per-n, be concerned about that other person. nen you will find happiness."

But the young man left him and went on s way deciding to be unhappy. Jesus let m go. There I think is another basic prin-ple in salesmanship illustrated by our Lord; at the good salesman always gives the per-n a chance to choose. The Russian leader es not do that. He tells his followers what decide, what to think, washes their brains they cannot think. But we of the free rld say a man must choose because that implicit in self-government, no matter nether a person is a teacher or a minister an executive or what he is. A good sales-an achieves a relationship where the per-n makes a choice, for if he does not make s choice he has not been sold, he has been rced. If a man is selling a product and he erwhelms a man and gets his name on the tted line before the man knows what has ppened, he will hate the salsman later be-use his action was not his choice at all. at is no longer salesmanship. Salesman-ip is guiding a person's thinking until he mes to the light and makes his own choice.

Jesus let the rich young ruler make his n choice. Now, there are those who think did come back — those who think that he s Nicodemus — that while Jesus lost the e that day because he freed him, he made later. The great sales are not determined the first failure. The great salesmanship hievements are often made later.

I was with my father once in a town in nnsylvania when he went in to see a man. hen he came out I said, "How did you do?" said he did not even talk to the man about at he wanted to talk to him about—ferti-er. So we loafed around that day and he nt in the next day and came out. I said, ow did you do?" He said "I didn't do any-ng, he is not ready to talk." He went in the rd day and he sold eighteen carloads of tilizer. He failed the first day, failed the ond day, but in time he won.

PRICE OF PENETRATION

People know whether you are selling a product or whether you are selling an idea, but the great selling is not done in the first contact. One of the laymen keeps saying to me, "Now, remember, you have got to pay the price of penetration." That is great, that is a great idea. Jesus paid that price. He permitted the rich young ruler to go and think it through. Penetration was achieved and if it is true that it was Nicodemus, he even bought the spices with which to anoint the body of Jesus. Penetration is a great idea; something every parent ought to remember, something every minister must recall, something every politician ought to recall, something every employer ought to use, something every salesman who is selling a product must recall: the choice is with the person and when he makes it with all his heart, he is sold.

Then there will be no aftermath of hate. The minute we overwhelm a person and rush him into a decision we are a Stalin in minature. We may not mean to be but we are. Whenever we permit a prospect to decide, helping him to see all the facts, we have the spirit of our Lord and that is the spirit of the free world.

SELLING ONESELF

One day Jesus said to his disciples: "Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house there are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you that where I am there you may be also." Thomas said, still not sold, "We know not whither thou goest and how can we know the way?" Jesus answered and said unto him, "I am the way, the truth and the life." In other words I am that which I would sell. And the final test of all salesmanship is this: Not only am I sold but I am an illustration of this thing I am selling. That is the final test of all salesmanship. If I represent really the thing I am selling people can see it incarnate in me because they know that truth is most attractive when it is incarnate in human life. And so the final test of all selling is this: can they buy *you?* If they can buy you the chances are they will want your product.

I remember a long time ago a certain man in a certain business. Every time they moved him from a particular place there was a tremendous protest. The reason was that all his customers bought him and only incidentally they bought the thing he was selling.

FINAL TEST

The final test of all salesmanship is this: I am the way, the truth and the life. There are many important disciplines. If a man is actually a salesman he is out working. Nobody can check on him. You see one of the perils of the ministry is that the minister can stay in bed, he can loaf, he can shut himself in the office, he can get lazy. It can happen to ministers, to the teacher, to a lot of people, but it is also perilous to the man who is out selling.

Laziness is perilous to the free world. We can begin to rest on our laurels and forget that we are the salesmen of the greatest faith that has ever broken into the heart of men. So we need to keep informed, we need to be on the job, we need to keep alert, we need to be alive so that we do not even need to say, "I am the way of the truth and the life," because people will know it. You know if a man loves what he is selling. He does not have to tell you. Before you know it you buy him and then you want what he sells.

It is right that we should give dignity to salesmanship because it is one of the cornerstones of the free world. We believe not in coercion, we believe in salesmanship. Not that we sell somebody something, but by our example and influence and spirit we influence them to buy and to make the choices which, when added together, will not only keep us free but will also give strength and power to every institution of our common life and put the glories and fruits of freedom within the reach of all the people of the earth. Yes, salesmanship has dignity for it is holy.

CALLED OF GOD

Continued from page 2

to serve,—whether as ministers or laymen, whether as men and women in business, in professions, in homes, in schools and on farms, or as preachers, teachers, pastors, leaders.

Moreover, it is such a transformation, such a redemption from the commonplace, the hopelessness and the estrangement from God, that men and women continually cry, in our day as much as in Paul's. Half the human race needs to be delivered from raw starvation; almost all of it from the fear of obliteration by bombs and their deadly miasma of nuclear radiation. Millions of people, even in our own seemingly prosperous country, need to be redeemed from haunting anxieties, the more poignant because they are nameless. And in all these afflictions, men and women need for the one hand to be set free from the compulsions of guilt, from the fright and despair that comes from someday seeing themselves as they really are; while on the other, they cry out, like the gypsies of Wales did to George Barrow, "Sir, give us God!"

"Without God," wrote Herbert Farmer, "life hardly bears thinking about." A great many people try to escape this forlorn judgment by not thinking much about their lives at all. Sufficient unto today is the thoughtlessness thereof! But it is our work in the Church to bring them to think, both of their own lives, and of God; and to believe and to claim for themselves the great truth that "if any man is in Christ, he is a *new* creation; the old has passed away, the new has come."

PAUL'S ANSWER

How is this transformation of human nature and human experience to be brought about? To that question, Paul gives a confident answer, both for himself and for those to whom he is writing. "Paul, *called* to be an apostle through the will of God . . . to the church of God which is at Corinth, *called* to be saints." The new condition of his life and theirs has not been produced by their taking thoughts for themselves, or by devising a new course of living. He has not made himself an apostle; they have not made themselves to be holy people. They are what they are, apostle and saints, because God *calls* them into a new order of created life.

The idea of the Christian being called of God is not new. Those who have read the Bible will recall how often this word describes the experience of many who enter its pages—Abraham, Samuel, Amos, Jeremiah, to name a few at random. But the idea of being called of God exceeds in depth and breadth any specialized interpretation. The very term itself is only a figure of speech. God does not always—God very seldom—gives a person the convinced experience of having found himself spoken to by an audible voice. Still, the figure serves because we find no better one to convey the innumerable ways through which the Spirit of God works upon our minds and wills; and because it suggests the true nature of all our relations to God: the face to face which takes place when a living voice addresses the ear and the mind of the listener.

We are called of God, because this is the essential relationship in which every man, not simply the minister or the religious worker, and not simply the Christian layman, stands before God Himself. To be called of God means to stand and live in this essential

d inescapable relationship to Him: to be nfronted by Him who speaks to us, and quires our response, and rewards us with race and peace." Our part is always re-onsibility toward what God proposes.

CHURCH OF GOD

Paul addresses the Christians at Corinth "the church of God, called to be saints." might be suggested that the Greek words ed here make a pun. The word translated "called"—"klesia"—means "summoned, vited;" and the word translated as hurch"—"ekklesia"—means "the assembly those who are summoned."

Nor does the reiteration of meaning end ere. The word translated as "saints"—gios"—means "consecrated, separated, set art to holiness," and implies the act of God calling the Christians out to a purified e, separated from worldliness. So, within is brief address, Paul is able no less than ree times to express his conception of the urch, as the community of those who are lled of God, to the particular and separate e in Christ for which God intends us.

What follows? Is it not clear at once that e Church is not to be regarded as simply e institution among other kinds of institu-ns and organizations, even though these y serve an important function in our ciety, and may do much good. The Church not one more organization. The church's lpit is not a sounding board for public tice of all the activities various organiza-ns are thrusting upon a wearied com-unity; and its minister is not the promoter, ganizer, chaplain and errand-boy of every use, however worthy, that these groups v wish to further.

The church is the community of those who ve found themselves to be called of God to e new, conscious, and eternal life in Christ. ey may not be—in all probability, they are t and won't be—*saints,* in the sense of ving achieved a kind of spotless piety, and insufferable sanctimoniousness. But they e saints in their recognition that God is at rk in their lives to transform them into rsons infinitely different than anything y have yet become; and they are saints in ir will to use their lives wholly for His rvice; and to live them as much in His esence, and in love of Him, as they are able of doing.

The Church is, moreover, the *assembly,* the thering together, the true *community* of se persons who find themselves called of d. Most of our human relations, as we actice them in our societies and organiza-ns, are designed to bring people together familiarity and mutual helpfulness *up to a certain point;* beyond that point, they are designed to protect us from any further responsibility for, or to, one another. The English way of naming a corporation is to call it, "McTavish and Sons, *Limited,*"—meaning, limited by laws of incorporation in its financial responsibilities. The word might well be added to the name of most all of our social bodies and institutions. Even more, it might well be added on the front bulletin board of many churches: "St. Lazarus Christian Church,—*Limited.*"

"Blest Be the Tie that Binds" is finished:

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

We share each other's woes,
Each other's burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

But is this the church as we know it? Do we go to it rejoicing in anticipation of our coming together as those who are bound one to another in Christ; do we come from it assured that the prayers offered were our ardent prayers poured out for one another; are we convinced that here at least, here as nowhere else in the circuit of our life, we meet one another in a first-hand, primary way, and need not write after our communal name, the words, "Limited in Responsibility to and for each other?"

And that experience of the Church as the community of unlimited fellowship can be possible for us only as we can believe ourselves to be the community that is *called of God,* the assembly summoned at His purpose; the feast gathered at His invitation.

MINISTER'S CALL

And what can now be said concerning those who are, in a particular sense, "called to the ministry?" Well, it is clear, is it not, that becoming a minister is not a course that anyone enters upon and works out for his own personal motives and by his own personal devices. His decision to be a minister requires the most careful reflection and the most vigorous act of will of which he is capable. But even then, the decision is not of his own determination; at best, it is still his response to what he discovers God to be doing in and through and upon his life. "I was *made* a minister," declares Paul, "according to the dispensation of God." The voice of the verb is always passive; God is always the subject, the actor. No minister can ever be, in the deepest sense, a "self-made man."

Again, it is clear that the person called to

the ministry stands, first of all, with every other man and woman, as one called of God into his own essential life and being as a Christian. His vocation offers no escape from this primary and elemental relationship to God.

Still more, it is clear that his call to the ministry has meaning only within the community of those who also are called to be saints. This fact is dramatized from the very outset by the fact that it is the Church who ordains him to his service. No man can ordain himself to be a minister. It is the community of saints that examines him, and recognizes his vocation, and separates him for the work he is to do. And what the church thus begins, it continues in one way or another: the church will always be making, or unmaking him, a minister.

The truth of this relationship can be observed in one single aspect of a man's ministry: his preaching. The preacher is not, as we are sometimes tempted to think, an individualist privileged to enter his pulpit and deliver any message he believes appropriate. He is always the servant of the community, declaring *to* them the Word of God as it is given to him to understand it; and declaring *for* them the faith and the response they owe to God. Nor should he deceive himself with the illusion that his office bestows on him a prophetic freedom without regard to this service he owes the community.

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Even the call of the prophet makes no sense outside the community of those whom God has called to be his saints among men! And the preaching of sermons makes little sense outside of the hearing of congregations who gather, not out of a vague sense of their obligation somehow to keep the church going because the church is a good thing for the community, but who gather to praise God, to become renewed in the consciousness of His Presence in their lives, and to be strengthened and enlightened in His Word for their day by day responsibilities. "To have great poets," wrote Walt Whitman, "we must have great audiences." To have ministers called to preach, we must have also congregations call to hear, to believe, and to live by the Word of God. And what can be said here of the Church's making and unmaking the preacher, could be said with respect to every part of his service among the congregation.

But this mutual responsibility for, and to, each other on the part of the minister and the congregation points to the unique character of the service to which the minister is called. What is the real significance of the minister's call, and of the act by which he is ordained to his vocation? Protestants have been in some confusion over this question in recent years. Denying that ordination bestows upon the minister any special spiritual attributes, or sets him apart to any religious prerogatives, Protestantism has insisted upon "the priesthood of all believers." But that phrase is sometimes interpreted in such a way as to erode from the office of the ministry any qualities or functions that do not fall equally upon laymen, and has left his ordination to represent little more than, let us say, a ceremony comparable to a public official taking his oath of office.

OF ALL BELIEVERS

We should be saved from this error if we restored to our phrase the proper emphasis: the *priesthood* of all believers. For priesthood implies that our relations with God, however direct and solitary they are in His call to us, nevertheless partake of mystery, of spiritual difference between Himself as God and ourselves as human creatures; and that this relationship requires for our redemption some communication of His Spirit, His Grace and Peace, in terms and in ways that we can comprehend and receive. This, indeed, is what the whole teaching concerning the Incarnation means: that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. Priesthood, even among all believers, assumes that something of this incarnation is transmitted further to us as the Spirit of God takes His center in the lives of consecrated men and women, and so makes the Divine present and effective in our daily lives.

To this service, all believers are called. But to the fulfillment of this service, few believers have the opportunity, the time, the means, to give themselves. The ordinary, creaturely work of the world, the farm, the office, the home, has to be done, and their particular calling is to see that it is done to the good of men and the glory of God. The vocation of the minister, therefore, is, in the words of Daniel Jenkins, to be "fulltime what others of necessity can be only part time"—to be the "representative man" among men, setting forth by his labors, his study, his care of souls, his preaching of the Word of God, the kind of interior struggle of faith over doubt, of commitment over self-interest, of the love of God over the love of evil, that constitutes the real encounter of every human life. His calling, in a word, is so to live in this work that when he walks among men they will say, not "there goes a great preacher" but "This is what it means to every man to be called of God."

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BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

relevance. Many brilliant insights into messages of Jesus, Paul and John the angelist and a wise and penetrating analy- of the church in the modern world makes a readable and appealing guide for those o seek a relationship between yesterday l today. (Harper, 186 pp., $2.50)

Vinnifred Wygal's *How to Plan Informal rship* will improve group leadership by ing the reader a better understanding of meaning and essentials of worship. The nning of a variety of worship programs mplemented by illustrative services. (As- ation, 64 pp., $1)

book which will enrich the thought and ssage of all pastors is *The Great Realities* Samuel H. Miller, whose previous volumes, *Life of the Soul* and *The Life of the rch,* have been widely praised. The realities, here defined with clarity and compelling allusions, are: Man, the Starting Point; God, the Hope of Our Salvation; Prayer, the Living Dialogue; Worship, Belonging to a Church; Faith, Trying to Believe; Love, the Greatest Truth; and Peace, its Power and Joy. (Harper, 181 pp., $2.50)

Meditations from Kierkegaard, translated by T. H. Croxall, brings into a single volume the heart and mind of a great devotional spirit. The man, who has not discovered Kierkegaard for himself, will find this book to be a rare and meaningful devotional treasury. (Westminster, 165 pp., $3.)

The preaching possibilities of a major sermon theme are admirably demonstrated by Owen Hutchison in *Christian Love in Everyday Living.* Based on Paul's love chapter, this book applies Christian love "to the spiritual wounds and diseases of human life," and embraces all life, social and personal. (Westminster, 94 pp., $2.)

rth Quoting

he Christian rests his hope for a better ld on the work of the Spirit in the church, the leavening influence of the faithful in life of the world, on the self-destruction ival ways of life, the self-elimination alse ideologies in a world to which they inadequate, and on the irresistible extenn of the Christian faith to all portions of anity. Reversions of parts of Christenh to godlessness or idolatrous cults of ionalism only succeed in highlighting the dequacy of such ways of life. But it is as the Christian lives his faith that r comes to recognize itself. A significant e for mankind can be sustained only re the renewing power of the faith has course. "I, when I am lifted up from the h, will draw all men to myself." It is in that the world will look elsewhere for rue health.

Amos N. Wilder in *New Testament Faith for Today* (Harper)

* * * *

he spiritual life of the home carries its authority. The quality of spirit that ades the home determines the effectiveof relationship in every other area. The e is the institution that makes love the of its life. Here human beings find the est fulfillment for life. Here their souls made secure against the conflicts and ions that may be incident to the rest ife. When love rules the home its memgo out in strength and work with unstanding and good will, and return in idence to that which can restore their souls. When love fails at homes its members go out in despair, work with a sense of bitterness and frustration, and return for more rejection and defeat.

Edgar N. Jackson in *How to Preach to People's Needs* (Abingdon)

* * * *

We pray to reach through the shadows—the shadows of respectability, of success, prestige, and pride, of comfort and snug security, and the deeper shadows of shame, of guilt, and of sin, and even of death—to that larger life where we may live in the open mystery of God's everlasting mercy, where, living and dying, we stand in the presence of Him whose face shineth as the sun, whose wings are vast as night, whose hands hold the slender flower of the field against the blowing wind. We pray to find our nearest Neighbor—God; we pray to find Him in the intimate neighborhood of our own experience.

Samuel H. Miller in *The Great Realities* (Harper)

* * * *

George Fox says, "The light that shows us our sins is the light that heals us." Repentance is the consequence of coming into God's presence; it is the sudden realization of sin's ugliness, this particular sin's ugliness, and by the nature of such a sudden realization it is the repudiation of it. To really see beauty is to be freed from ugliness; to see truth is to be liberated from superstition; to see God is to be cleansed of sin. To be sure, all the roots may not be cut im-

mediately. A long warfare may ensue between ingrained habits, old associations, and the new vision. Surely of all the work in the world this is the hardest—to cut and hack and dig at the hidden tendrils, the dark origins, the burning embers.

Samuel H. Miller

* * * *

In religion there is no line drawn between past and present. Time is abrogated in faith. The great holy days are not celebrated as mere remembrances of a historical event in the distant past. They do recall such occasions, but they do it because there is in life and eternal recurrence of fundamental truth. The realities are not farther back in history than they are hidden deep in us. Life is all one. To understand what happened to Abraham or Jacob or David is to reveal certain facts about myself. If I am really available, if I see with seeing eyes and hear with hearing ears as Jesus said, I shall perceive Adam's sin in me, and in my spirit identify Christ, the hope of my glory. The cross will no longer be isolated from history or from the inner hill of my own heart, but I shall find it inescapable wherever sin and forgiveness cross their threads in human need.

Samuel H. Miller

A Lenten Series by
CHARLES L. SEASHOLES
First Baptist Church
Dayton, Ohio

Conspirators In Crisis

I

JUDAS ON TRIAL: "WHY THIS WASTE?"

bjection to waste is a worthy objection, vided it is not the kind of objection to it some called waste in an incident re- ted in all four Gospels. It was when the nan broke an alabaster box of precious ment to anoint the feet of Jesus.

he Gospels differ on who the woman was, they all record the same kind of com- it made, "Why this waste?" Who said ? Only the gospel of John says Judas it. But the other gospels tie Judas to it equence. From that time on he did certain gs. So Judas is tied into it in ways we l see later.

ut when is objection to waste worthy? In first place, it is worthy provided the ob- ion is in the interest of what it claims to n the interest of. Objection to waste in rnment is worthy, if it is in the public rest—if it is making objection to waste he capital and not just making capital of waste. The test of sincerity and concern the public interest is revealed in votes on ific measures to save money.

JUDAS' OBJECTION

udas said that his objection to the waste he ointment was in the interest of the r. But John says his real interest was to l from the money bag which he carried the group. That may have been later re- ion on the character of Judas after the le story of the betrayal was known. In- l his real interest may have been in- ous compared with embezzlement but not really in the interest he claimed it

e may have been just afflicted with sureritis. Sometimes a person becoming easurer is more concerned to show a nice nce instead of doing the things the funds e intended to do. Or in claiming an in- st in the poor, Judas may have been like rson who is interested in charity except he particular charity that is presented. n appeal is for foreign missions, then we e enough to do at home. If home mis- s, then the social agencies should take of it. If you come for the Community st, then the government is taxing to take of it. If the government does it, the rnment ought to stay out and let private agencies do it. Coming back to private agencies, they are spending a lot of money they do not need to spend. So even the claim to interest in general charitableness may be just a cloak for coveteousness.

A church officer once remarked, "If a fellow does not want to give, he'll find a peg to hang an objection on." Sometimes it's just a phrase in the folder that is sent out. Or it may be "why this waste?" Some even wonder about the church staff. What does this one do and what does that one do? When you heard the reports at the Annual Meeting, of what each one did, you realized how such work takes hours and hours of devoted time.

IMPERSONAL PEG

Or more frequently, the peg that an objection is hung on is an impersonal peg, "They are spending a lot of money they do not have to spend down there." One answer is, "Yes!" Our officers are spending a lot of money they do not have to spend, if, the members really wanted to have a second rate institution. But most of you want to have a building that you can be proud of, "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." The answer to this objection is from another point of view, "No!" They are not spending a lot of money they do not have to spend, in the sense that we are not getting full value. We have a book, which is not a Bible with a capital "B" nor a book of devotions, but is a book of devotion. It is a book in the form of a file that indicates just where we are to order things for the best value and the best price. Into that has gone the devotion of the lay officers of our church responsible for the building. So from non-skid wax in the corridors, to non-drip candles in the sanctuary for weddings and communion, to accoustical ceilings to cut down the clatter and chatter in the kitchen, to a remarkably reasonable treatment of the glaring big window the pastor has to face, you are having men conserve the resources of this church and spending wisely.

Sometimes people hang their objection to wanting to give on the peg, "I am not doing much *but* I am doing a lot of things nobody knows about." Everybody is, but that should not be an excuse for not doing what somebody ought to know about and count on. One of our most generous and approachable members is one who does a big share here *and*

does a lot of things nobody knows about.

CONFUSION OF VALUES

Objection to waste is worthy in the second place, provided it does not indicate a confusion of values as to what is useful and what is useless. People who attack so-called "frills" in public school education, have no appreciation of the values in the development of a child through creative activities. It is legitimate and necessary to want to cut the fat out of government appropriations. But if anybody just slashes at things which don't seem to add up in practical values, they may cut the vocal cords of the voice of America in a time when the propaganda war is most vital and Russia is stepping it up. Or they may cut the heart out of the aid to backward countries which shows America's true heart. Or if they cut too close like Shylock demanding a pound of flesh nearest the heart, they may drain the blood which Shylock was forbidden to do, without which the heart would pump in vain.

Durin gthe depression when some churches asked to have the mortgage rate reduced, bankers objected to the "waste" of their missions contributions. They were roundly rebuked by one who dared them to take over the churches and run them themselves and see how much they got for their mortgages. He knew and we know that the missions interest is the very lifeblood of the church and is not a waste at all. Indeed it may be "bread cast on the waters" as it was in the war when aviators fell into islands where Christian natives ministered to them and they "found the church there."

BEAUTY AND USE

So in our individual lives and in our church life there is the need of both roses and bread, things of beauty and things of use. Even worship itself should not be sacrificed to such good causes as feeding the poor. Worship itself is what prompts the generous impulses that result in giving to the aid of the poor.

All of this leads up to Judas and to what Judas was up to after this incident. He was led from confusion of values to betrayal of his Master. As a cynic "knows the price of everything and the value of nothing," he who claimed that the ointment should have been sold for three hundred denarii, came to sell Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Was that what Jesus was worth? No, that was what Judas was worth. Starting with the wrong sense of values, he ended with a low price on himself.

Still as of old
Man by himself is priced.
For thirty pieces
Judas sold himself
Not Christ!

Over against Judas, remembered for tl thirty pieces of silver, is this woman wh it was said would be remembered whereev this story was told. Why? She did what sh could, she did not wait for imagined bount she used what she had and did what sh could. She is remembered also because a Jesus said, it was a beautiful thing she did— in the way she did it and the spirit of he giving.

Why did she do it? If she was Mary Mag dalene, she had been forgiven much an that's why she did it. If she was Mary o Bethany, she had been given much. Jesu had meant so much in their home in times o happiness and times of deep need.

FRAGRANCE IN THE ROOM

We read that the fragrance of the ou poured ointment filled the room.

Master, no offering costly and sweet
May we, like Magdalene, lay at thy feet;
Yet may love's incense rise, sweeter than sacrifice,
Dear Lord, to thee, dear Lord, to thee.

May this room be filled with the fragranc of the service of our loving giving and th giving of our loving service, dear Lord t Thee.

Thus, in thy service, Lord, till eventide
Closes the day of life, may we abide;
And when earth's labors cease, bid us depart in peace,
Dear Lord, to thee, dear Lord, to thee.

II

PETER ON TRIAL: "WHAT IS YOUR ACCENT?"

One of the most interesting and infor mative things about a person's speech is hi accent. Now an accent may be an authenti accent or an affected accent. Leopold Stokos ki, who always spoke with a broad continent al accent, was really born in London thoug his father was Polish and his accent that i most familiar to us was a purely affecte one. A Scotch accent has always been though to be an asset to a preacher. It is a fine ac cent if it is authentic. But a Scotch accent i a preacher may only mean that he studied i Union Seminary when the Scotchman Hug Black taught preaching and picked up an af fected accent from him. One of the most cha acteristic things about Peter Marshall, th

n called Peter, was his Scotch accent and of the finest things about him was t it was an authentic accent. He was not ected in that nor in anything else.

he man called Simon Peter had a Gali- accent. It was an authentic accent and t was his undoing. Peter was warming self at the fire outside the palace where us was being taken to trial. A young wo- n came along and saw him there, took one k and said, "You are one of them." Peter a kind of up-country Galilean look re- led in the firelight. But Peter then denied emently that he had anything to do with us. But in his very denying the young wo- n caught an accent that was unmistakably ilean and she said, "Your speech betrays . You are a Galilean. Your accent is hentic." That's what led to Peter's un- ng.

AFFECTED ACCENT

Having said that, we now say that Peter's nt was an affected accent and that more y led to his undoing. An accent can be cted in other ways than in literal tone stress. It can reveal affectation of atti- e in speech or in action. Even in the use of guage there is this kind of affectation. all know what a person is who talks like ighbrow. We say he's affected. But low- w is just a high-brow up-ended. It is just affected to appear to be low-brow as it be high-brow.

When President Charles W. Elliott spoke ome newsboys in Boston, people thought would probably have to talk on their level. words of course had to be simple but eone remarked who heard him that his guage was just as chaste and fine as if he e talking to university professors, and boys understood and appreciated every d. He didn't affect a slangy, slovenly ch which would have been out of charac- for him.

OUT OF CHARACTER

There may be particular point that it was n Peter began to curse and to swear that affected accent was revealed as well as literal Galilean. I know a prominent in- trialist in another city whose most char- ristic element in speech is his profanity, lurid blasphemous oaths but other kinds words that he often doesn't hesitate to use n they are considered out of place even those who would not object to the words where. Well, out of place or not I believe t it is out of character. Some day in the nt way I hope to tell him how I think he in that habit. He was a fine-grained, cul- tured, talented young man, went into indus- try and felt that he had to talk tough to over- come what would be his differential of cul- ture and talent. I wonder if he really ever had to. In any event he is way beyond the need of it now. His speech now reveals him with this characteristic but I think it also reveals him as out of character.

In public life and in public speech, some- times people feel that in the language they use and the stories they tell, they have to take a certain approach in order to get in on the level of their hearers. But a good rule in all those things is, "When in doubt, don't." A thing can be amusing without being of- fensive and the offensive thing may be not truly you and an affectation.

ACCENT OF HYPOCRISY

So we pass on to say that the accent of hypocrisy is an affected accent. We all know what that means in the usual term of hy- pocrisy. Someone's affected accent of hy- pocrisy is of holy tone or may be the use of pious phrases that are not really sincere. But there is another kind of hypocrisy of speech and of action which someone has call- ed the "new hypocrisy," in which a person pretends not to be better than he is but to be worse than he is. And when that is the case the accent is an affected accent of hypocrisy of life.

So when Peter speaking with his literal Galilean accent that was authentic but with his spiritual accent that was affected, denied his Lord, Jesus passing along looked down upon him and, as the painting has it that you're so familiar with, Peter then recalled what Jesus had said and wept bitterly.

Well, how does a man get to the place where he speaks and acts out of character as Peter did that night when Jesus was on trial, but Peter himself was also on trial? Peter got there first through over-confi- dence. When Jesus had warned that men would fall away and not follow after him, Peter said at once with over-confidence "Though all men should desert you, I will never do it." It is fine to want to be and to resolve to be an exception. But just to as- sume that you will be an exception and not to do anything to insure it and to safeguard yourself in it, is the folly of overconfidence.

There's a verse in the Old Testament: "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." Instead of saying I am different just because I am, it is well to say, no, I am not different from others and if I want to be different in time of testing I must be zealous and watchful to insure it.

OVER-CONFIDENCE

Peter's downfall through over-confidence may have been because he pictured that the test would come in some grand dramatic issue. Rather it came in a very casual off-hand thing when he was warming his hands by the fire and when he was taunted by a maid. Peter underestimated, as Luccock has put it, "The power of ridicule, of crowd pressure, his own reluctance to be singled out as an exception." He who gladly stood up to the soldiers who came with swords and staves to take Jesus, just could not stand up to the social pressure of a young woman's taunt.

And so the accent of over-confidence issued in the accent of denial. But in-between was the time when Jesus knowing how severely he himself would be tested, went forward a little and prayed. Coming back and finding his disciples sleeping, he said, "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation." Don't assume too much, don't rely too much on yourself, but seek constantly all the spiritual reinforcement you can command, lest in the hour of trial you may act out of character and deny your Lord. Rather, fervently pray in the line of the hymn,

> In the hour of trial, Jesus plead for me.
> Lest by base denial I depart from Thee.

UNDER COMMITMENT

If it was over-confidence that initially led to Peter's denial, it was also under-commitment. We read, "Peter followed afar off." Now it is much to his credit that he did follow, as some of the others did not. But he followed afar off, he wasn't right up front there committed to the cause and the person of Christ. It was his downfall that he did not follow in his Christian discipleship close enough to his Lord. But even in the act and accent of denial, he could not prevent the accent of true relationship being heard. That's the surprising and the reassuring thing. People may roughly or even profanely disclaim any Christian interest. But in the very denying of it they betray the real Christian. There is something still there bothering them, gripping them, never letting them go.

In an article in "Commonweal" about James Joyce, who wrote the book called "Ulysess," the writer says that James Joyce though apostate from Catholicism was still catholic in his apostasy. Catholic concepts still haunted him and gripped him. He just could not get away from it, the accent brok through.

A man in public life was a hard and heav acting and blatantly profane man. But all th time I felt that he was trying to drown ou the Galilean accent of his early Christia home. I once told him that I believed h really cared. When once you have been touch ed with it you never can get away from it Something will recall it.

Had Peter that night revealed the au thentic accent of his real conviction an relationship to Christ, who knows but wha the maid who taunted him or one of th bystanding soldiers might not then and there have been so deeply impressed as to becom a follower of Jesus too?

> To thy own self be true
> And it must follow as the night the day
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Let your accent always be authentic Gali lean!

III

HEROD ON TRIAL: "WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT THAT?"

It's funny what some people think is funny. People are funny that way.

The funniest of all people are people who never think anything is funny—who are de void of either wit or humor. Humor may be warming or chilling, stinging or soothing. It may have a sting in it or it may take the sting out of other things. It is helpful or hurtful.

In speaking about Peter the word was said "Thy speech betrayeth thee—your accent betrays you." Now we say "your laugh betrays you or reveals you." So it was with a man named Herod.

We are considering the trial of Jesus and the question of who was on trial before whom. Betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, Jesus was taken to trial before Pilate. But Pilate hearing from the charges made that Jesus was from Galilee, had the sudden inspiration to send him to Herod the local ruler of Galilee. This was not the old Herod who had killed the children at the time of the birth of Jesus. This was one of his sons Herod Antipas, called the tetrarch which means that he ruled one-fourth of the kingdom of his father. We have asked again and again in these matters of the trial of Jesus who was really on trial? It was Herod who was on trial before Jesus. What was it that was on trial? It was Herod's humor. It was tragic what he thought was funny as we shall see.

USES OF HUMOR

We should note first that Herod was on
il for his humor before One who knew
right uses of humor. Jesus was not with-
a sense of humor. It is said of him, "None
a joyful soul could have shed over his
ching, as serious teaching as there is in
race's history, such a spontaneous play
good humor as Jesus uses."

The fundamental failing in regard to
nor is this—taking seriously what ought
be taken lightly, which is the failing of
humorless, and taking lightly what ought
be taken seriously, the peril of the
morist. There is a kind of humor about
ich we have a right to ask, "What's so
ny about that?" American humor should
d some things too sacred for parody.
rod's failing in life all along was taking
tly what should have been taken seriously
l his humor just revealed it.

Herod took the marriage relationship
tly. He saw his brother's wife Herodias
l took her from his brother and put away
own wife. This woman Herodias remain-
at his side through life as his evil genius.
was a kind of Nero and Pompeia set-up
ore the time of Nero and Quo Vadis.

Then John the Baptist confronted Herod
h what he had done, representing the
h of God to him much as Nathan had
od before David and said, "Thou art the
n." Unlike David who took the word of
th to heart, Herod lightly turned it off
l then put John in prison to get away
m the unpalatable truth.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Then there came the time when he took
tly what he ought to have taken serious-
That is, the prerogatives and responsibili-
of his kingship. Herodias, cherishing her
dge against John the Baptist who was
guishing in prison, had her daughter and
rod's step-daughter, Salome, dance before
at a drunken feast. Under the spell of
t occasion Herod had exclaimed, "I'll give
anything you ask even to the half of my
gdom." That was lightly and rashly deal-
with the responsibilities of his kingship.
n Edward's abdication, Peter Marshall
the British rather than the American
nt of view. "Americans had their eyes on
romance of the situation. To the British,
re was more to it than that. Their sov-
gn was not just relinquishing the British
one. He was abdicating his heritage—his
solemn responsibility. He was dessert-
the post for which he had been trained
m birth."

Looking back upon those days, I think even Americans can now understand more deeply what was involved. It is conceivable that the marriage of the Simpsons might have broken up tragically and that would have been regarded understandingly. It was not that however, but something taken lightly. In any event when the British passed through their time of trial and testing, the war and the blitz, they had a saving humor that took lightly even the serious things of that day. But, paradoxically, they were able to do that because they had with them then a king and a queen who were not those who took lightly the bond and obligation of personal and representative life.

LIGHTLY PROMISED

Having thus taken lightly what he should have taken seriously, Herod then took seriously what he had promised lightly—the head of John the Baptist on a platter. He carried out that promise ruthlessly. This was the man to whom Jesus was brought for trial, but who in the true sense was himself on trial before Jesus. Here the judgment on his whole life and his kind of humor, his taking things lightly and taking things seriously, is brought to high focus.

At first. Herod seemed to take Jesus seriously. He had heard of him and wanted to discuss religion with him. But again, as always with him, he was taking lightly what he should have taken seriously. He had been glad to discuss religion with John the Baptist earlier. But he did not want religion to discuss him, his deeds and his needs. Sometimes an apparent interest in discussion of religion is anything but a serious concern. It may be only a person's way of avoiding the serious searching question of his own life in terms of religion.

MIRACLE IN HIM

Herod also said that he wanted Jesus to perform a miracle for him. That was just a light desire on his part. Rather he needed seriously to have a miracle performed *in* him, to change his life and his attitude and his humor. To all this Jesus replied with silence. Jesus who would eagerly take up any opening of wistful interest on the part of a person, made no answer, but rebuked with silence the man whose only interest was superficial and supercilious. Herod then, finding he was getting nowhere, resorted to his usual practice of turning off flippantly what he was unwilling to face seriously. He and his courtiers arrayed Jesus in a robe and mocked him and the peals of laughter resounded down the corridors of the palace as they led Jesus away.

What should we say about this whole matter of humor and the way to take life seriously or lightly? C. S. Lewis in "Screwtape Letters," written as if from a ruler in the lower world to his nephew who is trying to work the way of the lower world with people, says something about Joy, Fun, the Joke proper, and Flippancy. He says that joy and fun leave no opening for the insidious devices of the lower world. The Joke proper he says gives a little more chance for it can become so to speak the joke improper. But it is flippancy that will really give a chance with people. "If prolonged, the habit of flippancy builds up around a man the finest armor-plating against the Enemy (God) that I know."

TWO VIEWPOINTS

I think of two preachers of Scotch descent and accent in this matter. The first is Peter Marshall and a chapter in his wife's biography is entitled "Christianity Can be Fun." Mrs. Marshall tells how a man who had been driven away from church by gloomy religion in his boyhood as he recalled it, was persuaded by his wife to come to hear Peter Marshall and made the startling discovery that Christianity can be fun. She then concludes the chapter which recites some incidents of humor in Peter's life with the statement: "Christianity can be fun, fun can be Christian, and it is the King's joy to share our good times."

The second Scotch preacher used to say very often, "Take Jesus Christ seriously."

The paradox is that Christianity can be fun when you take Jesus Christ seriously. Conversely when you take Him lightly, then life can become seriously tragic, as Herod's story proved. Perhaps you have never taken seriously this matter of Christian decision, but have turned it aside lightly. It is a serious matter, this matter of Christian decision. But it can become the happy day that fixed your choice.

Down through the corridors of time has come the sound of the hollow laughter from Herod's hall. But down through time and beyond it comes what we read in the Latvian hymn, "My God and I":

> My God and I, go in the field together,
> We walk and talk as good friends should and do,
> We clasp our hands, our voices ring with laughter,
> My God and I, walk through the meadow's hue.
> My God and I, will go for aye together,
> We'll walk and talk and jest as good friends do.
> Solemnly and yet joyously we dare to say,
> "Won't that be fun!"

IV

CAIAPHAS ON TRIAL: "WHAT IS EXPEDIENT FOR US?"

Charges ultimately civil and against Rom made the trial of Jesus a case for Pilat Charges initially Jewish and ecclesiastic made it a case for Caiaphas the high pries What Caiaphas did with that case we knov He adjudged Jesus guilty of death and pas ed him along to Pilate for the death sentenc to be carried out.

Jesus on trial was a case for Caiapha But Caiaphas on trial is a case for us t consider. What case is there for Caiaphas How would he state it? Caiaphas stated h own case when he and those with him bega to take counsel together to put Jesus to deatl

In the first place Caiaphas claimed "th security of our nation is at stake and th man Jesus is a security risk." His exac words were, "If we let this man alone, th Romans will come and take away both ou place and nation."

Notice the order of words. Their own plac of power and privilege was first and not th nation. The arrangement under the Romar was a good thing for them and that's wha Caiaphas was thinking of and not the goo of the nation. In any situation when th security of the nation is set forth by me against anything that might disturb it, it i well to ask whether it is the nation or thei own privileged place that they are concern ed about.

JESUS' PROMISE

In the second place, Caiaphas claimed "Our religious institutions are at stake. Thi man threatens to destroy them." At the pre liminary questioning of Jesus, Caiaphas ha witnesses who claimed that Jesus had saic "I will destroy this temple and build it agai in three days." Jesus had said something lik that, but they had twisted it out of contex and changed some words. He had said, "De stroy this temple, that is, if this templ should be destroyed in the course of event and God's judgment, I will build it again i three days." What Jesus made was not threat but a promise. This statement ma reflect the truth that after the resurrectio the church which Jesus did build took th place of the temple which later the Roman did destroy. But here again it was his ow place that is again the concern of Caiapha

er than the place of the institutions of religion.

the third place, Caiaphas would say, any event for one man to die for the y is fitting and proper." One to die for many! That has tones and overtones of of the noblest words and motives of man- of vicarious giving of one life, one's for others. So much does it suggest thing noble that the Gospel writer says Caiaphas as high priest uttered words he did not intend and that he did not prehend. Jesus, the one dying for the y, would bring all mankind together. that does not make a case for Caiaphas. he meant was, "Let us put this one man of the way and that will keep us at peace the Romans and the people can be paci- by our letting the Romans actually put to death."

CASE FOR CAIAPHAS?

oes all of this add up to a real case for phas? No, all it adds up is what Caiaphas self called it—expediency. "It is ex- ent for us that one man should be put ath for all the people."

xpediency is sometimes commendable n you choose the best possible thing when conceivable best is not attainable. But it t expedient to do injustice. So expedien- on trial in the person of Caiaphas be- Jesus.

ne of the finest things of Victorian era, h some people say Britain is returning some ways, was Queen Victoria's re- l to do something just for expediency. olitical affairs in our own country ex- ency takes the name of smart politics. If are in power, it is smart politics to claim ything and admit nothing. If you are out wer, it is smart politics to oppose every- g and give credit for nothing. You do consider what is right but what is ex- nt or smart.

t when expediency is made the deter- ng motive, even by its own standard it not always turn out to be the smart g. Smart politics are not so smart after ometimes because the people are not so b. They have a sense of what is right and and not just of what is expedient and t.

EVENT WITH GOD

o one knows where the political lightning strike, but what strikes me as hearten- and enlightening is the record of two rnors of different parties who in critical s and critical decisions were motivated by expediency but what they believed to be right. One said, "That one decision lost me half my friends, but I still think it was right." The other spelled out his conviction in a message vetoing a bill: "I know that to veto this bill in this period of grave anxiety will be unpopular with many. But I must in good conscience protest against any unnecessary suppression of our ancient rights as free men." Such convictions and actions could well mark for America the return not to the Victorian era but the Washingtonian era when George Washington said: "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair. The event is with God." The event is with God, the God not of expediency but of right, whose high priest is not Caiaphas but Christ.

Let us look again at the case Caiaphas claimed for himself and appraise it in terms not of expedency but of right. Security of the nation, of our nation, is a problem, for there are hostile forces without and some subversive forces within. But does that make a case for Caiaphas and expediency? Rather it makes a case for careful concern and discriminating justice. As one of these worthy governors said, "We must not burn down the house to kill the rats."

RESPONSIBILITY AND FREEDOM

The book, *I Led Three Lives*, is by a man who never was a communist by conviction nor a psychopathic personality. He was rather a normal young man who notified the FBI about what he observed in a youth group and then lived his triple life in order to testify later for the government. If any one knows the peril of communism it is he. But what does he say each one of us ordinary citizens can do? He says we must make sure not to become what the communists want us to become. They want us to become a people who do not allow our basic freedoms but rather have rigid controls. Then they can point to us as a typical capitalist society for which communism must bring the solution. He ends up by saying that we must preserve the individual's freedom along with individual responsibility.

We may be guilty of the high crime of Caiaphas not just when people are brought up to trial in courtrooms, but when people come up for conversation in living rooms. There are kangaroo courts of casual conversation and Christ is on trial before us and we are on trial before Him in the way we pass judgment.

Our religious institutions are at stake in the world and in the nation. There are those who do not believe in them and would destroy them. There are those who would de-

stroy them by denying their truth in attacking them. There are others that would destroy them by denying their truth in defending them. There are false Christian fronts as well as false fronts for Communism. The church is an institution that cannot say lightly the individual does not matter in relation to the institution. For as an institution it is built on concern for the individual.

FRIEND OF SINNERS

More subtle because it is so often sincere is the concern that people may have that the church may be hurt because of some association of individuals. But in cases of lapse or unfortunate associations, the sole concern should not be what will happen to the church because of this, but rather what has happened to that person and what can be done about that. We can stand *by* people even when we cannot stand up for them.

Jesus was given the name "friend of sinners" and it was intended to impute guilt by association. But what he was more concerned about for people and would be for his church, was guilt by non-association, in the priest and Levite who passed by on the other side when there was a case of need on the Jerusalem to Jericho road.

When we come to Caiapha's third point that one should die for the many, there is a sense in which what was wrong by expediency has become true by the deeper truth of vicarious sacrifice. There *was* One who did die for the many. When we survey the wondrous cross, before we too readily claim its sacrifice on our behalf, we need to stand as we have been standing in the place where Judas, Peter and Caiaphas stood and ask ourselves if we have ever been prompted by their motives and thus adjudged with their guilt. Is it only Judas or has it ever been me who with a wrong sense of values have come to sell out the precious things of our lives? Is it only Peter or have we ever been faltering or flagging in our following of Christ, or been out of character in denying our true relationship and accent of living? Is it only Caiaphas who followed what was expedient rather than what is right or do we ourselves fall into that grave error and by expediency stulify ourselves and crucify others? Then and only then when we have felt our complicity and contrition can we accept the wondrous truth that somehow God did bring about for good what men intended for evil and One did die for salvation for all men. That can make everything right for us when we could not make it right for ourselves. Accepting his proferred grace brings us to right relationship at once and then into the course of an ever better li with Him and for Him.

V

THE CROWD ON TRIAL: "WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?"

Pilate said, "What shall I do with Jesus' It was to the crowd milling around his jud men hall that Pilate put that question. B that question has hurtled over the heads that crowd down through the centuries ar is what is called "the inescapable questic about the unavoidable Christ."

Pilate *had* to do something with Jesus. was a case for his jurisdiction sent up fro the Jewish court. What should he do wit Jesus? Pilate thought he had found an a swer, "I'll let the crowd decide it for me.'

Earlier in the court proceedings Pilate ha done that with a previous question, "Who shall I release unto you, Jesus or Barabbas' He had been dead-sure the crowd woul choose Jesus. But they cried, "Barabbas. Pilate was in for it. Having let the crow decide the first question, he was carried long to where he had to let them decide th second question, "What shall I do wit Jesus?" The crowd cried, "Crucify him."

What has all of this for us? Whenev anyone says, "I'll let the crowd decide it fo me," he is in for it, with as serious and fa reaching consequences for him as for Pilat

POLL OF OPINION

Someone has said that Pilate instituted poll of public opinion to answer that que tion. That procedure has become an elaborat one in our day. A prominent public offici a few years ago is said to have been such good friend of a famous pollster that he d cided that the way to make decisions on pul lic policy was to let the question arise, tak a poll on it, and then act according to th poll. What upset it all was that the poll wa not right on the first question as to who wa going to do the deciding in the term of year ahead. But it was a wholesome jolt to wha was becoming the growing substitute fo real thinking and personal decision—lettin the crowd decide it for us by polls of opinio

In matters of what is right in conduc the policy, "I'll let the crowd decide it fo me" becomes, "I'll let a scientific survey o customs and morals settle the matter fo me." But what is prevalent is not to be take as normative or right. Sometimes such a sur vey only indicates how far humanity ha dropped from its true standard.

Pilate thought he had let the crowd decid it for him but he had not. They formed th decision, but he had to perform it and th

onsibility was inescapably his. In the t sense Jesus was on trial before Pilate then on trial before the crowd when e shifted it over to the crowd. But in s judgment and in the perspective of ry both Pilate and the crowd were on before Jesus. Pilate was on trial for ling to let the crowd decide and the d was on trial for deciding what they decide. What they did with Jesus is the ment upon them.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

at trial goes on forever and we and our d are on trial before Jesus. If we let ers of what is truth be determined by t the crowd thinks, then we are on trial re him who confronted Pilate as truth rnate when Pilate asked in a merely ulative mood, "What is truth?" It has said, "Ah, Pilate, if you had only vn, the answer was right there before It was truth in a life and truth about " Whatever may be the speculative reach- f truth in other realms, in the realm of t is moral and spiritual Christ stands as inescapable judge. What will you do with s as truth?

matters of what is right in conduct e are no pat answers to particular ques- s as to what would Jesus do. But, none- ess, what we do should be brought into judgment of his life of ultimate decency right. If we just let the crowd decide for who decides for the crowd? It just goes nd in a circle and often it is the person t competent and worthy who sets the and calls the tune for the crowd.

CHEERING AND JEERING

ot the crowd on the night of the trial, the crowd on the day of triumph is what try to recapture on Palm Sunday. The hosannas were an expression of spon- ous enthusiasm and acclaim. Life would poorer without such demonstrations. eover, it is not accurate to say that that e crowd which cheered on Sunday jeered hursday. The make-up of the two crowds different. But it is true to say that the d on Palm Sunday was also on trial re Jesus.

e test of the Palm Sunday crowd was hat they might be found in the crowd hursday night, but rather where would Sunday crowd be on Monday?

They pluck their palm branches and
hail Him as King,
Early on Sunday;
They spread out their garments;
hosannas they sing,
Early on Sunday.
But where is the noise of their hurrying feet,
The crown they would offer, the sceptre, the seat?
Their King wanders hungry, forgot in the street,
Early on Monday.[1]

So it is with any Palm Sunday crowd like this one. It is an occasion of joy to acclaim Jesus in this crowd. But as you are in the crowd, the question is personally yours, "What will you do with Jesus in the way of continuing conviction and commitment when Sunday is past?"

CHURCH BACK HOME

Some of those who were in the Palm Sunday crowd that day and who were not with Him beyond that day, were Galileans who may have thought to themselves that they had a connection with Jesus back in Galilee and they did not see any reason to move it to Jerusalem. They thought so much of the old home church back there, so to speak. But they were in Jerusalem and Jesus was in Jerusalem and the place to show their allegiance to Him was in the place where they found Him then. What about your relationship to Him someplace up north or down south, when you are here and the challenge of His church is here for you?

The test of our loyalty to the church which may have a unique place with us as our first church or home church, is whether we prize it so much that we want to have a vital relationship where we are as we go from place to place.. The more likely you are not to be very long in a place is the more reason for you to make your membership active wherever you are. Otherwise you just become a part of the drifting crowd instead of the vital following of Jesus. Some of you may have such tender associations elsewhere. What will you do with that relationship here today?

"Jesus is standing in Pilate's hall"
and Jesus was standing as the crowd faded after Palm Sunday. Jesus is standing on trial still.

What will you do with Jesus?
Neutral you cannot be.
Someday your heart will be asking
What will He do with me?

Come out of the crowd to conscious allegiance and vital relationship with Him.

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[1]By Edwin McNeill Poteat and reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.